
COVER SHEET

Responsible Agency: United States Department of Energy (DOE), National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA)

Title: Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Relocation of Technical Area 18 Capabilities and Materials at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (TA-18 Relocation EIS)

Locations: New Mexico, Nevada, Idaho

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Abstract: The National Nuclear Security Administration, a separately organized agency within DOE, is responsible for providing the Nation with nuclear weapons, ensuring the safety and reliability of those nuclear weapons, and supporting programs that reduce global nuclear proliferation. These missions are accomplished with a core team of highly trained nuclear experts. One of the major training facilities for these personnel is located at Technical Area 18 (TA-18), within the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), Los Alamos, New Mexico. Principal TA-18 operational activities involve research in and the design, development, construction, and application of experiments on nuclear criticality.

Though TA-18 is judged to be secure by DOE's independent inspection office, its buildings and infrastructure are from 30 to more than 50 years old and are increasingly expensive to maintain and operate. Additionally, the TA-18 operations are located in a relatively isolated area, resulting in increasingly high costs to maintain a security Category I infrastructure. NNSA wishes to maintain the important capabilities currently provided at TA-18 in a manner that reduces the long-term costs for safeguards and security. NNSA proposes to accomplish this by relocating the TA-18 security Category I/II capabilities and materials to new locations.

The *TA-18 Relocation EIS* evaluates the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts associated with this proposed action at the following DOE sites: (1) a different site at LANL at Los Alamos, New Mexico; (2) the Sandia National Laboratories/New Mexico at Albuquerque, New Mexico; (3) the Nevada Test Site near Las Vegas, Nevada (the Preferred Alternative); and (4) the Argonne National Laboratory-West near Idaho Falls, Idaho. The EIS also analyzes the alternatives of upgrading the existing TA-18 facilities and the No Action Alternative of maintaining the operations at the current TA-18 location.

Public Comments: The draft EIS was issued for public review and comment on August 17, 2001. The public comment period was scheduled to end on October 5, 2001, but due to the events of September 11, 2001 the comment period was extended to October 26, 2001. Public hearings to solicit comments on the draft EIS were held in Idaho, Nevada and New Mexico. All comments were considered

during the preparation of the final EIS, which also incorporates additional and new information received since the issuance of the draft EIS. In response to comments on the *TA-18 Relocation Draft EIS*, the final EIS contains revisions and new information. These revisions and new information are indicated by a double underline for minor word changes or by a sidebar in the margin for sentence or larger additions. Appendix J contains the comments received during the public review period of the *TA-18 Relocation Draft EIS* and DOE's responses to these comments. DOE will use the analyses presented in this final EIS as well as other information in preparing the Record of Decision for the proposed relocation of TA-18 capabilities and materials at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. DOE will issue this Record of Decision no sooner than 30 days after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency publishes a notice of availability of this final EIS in the *Federal Register*.